

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 HA-05 TRSE-00 SMS-02 SES-02 DOE-15 SOE-02  
SAS-02 OES-09 NEA-10 /127 W  
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R 081544Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7926  
USICA WASHDC  
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
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EO 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SOPN, PINS, PINT, PEPR, US, GE  
SUBJECT: GDR PRESS ON HELSINKI ANNIVERSARY AND ON  
HUMAN RIGHTS

REFS: (A)MOSCOW 18058, (B)MOSCOW 18318, (C)BERLIN 4660,  
(D) BERLIN 4408, (E)BERLIN 4950

1. SUMMARY THREE YEARS AFTER HELSINKI AND DURING A  
PERIOD WHEN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE EASTERN  
BLOCK HAVE RECEIVED PROMINENT ATTENTION, THE GDR PRESS  
HAS SOUGHT TO DEFEND THE EASTERN POSITION BY  
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EMPHASIZING THE FOLLOWING INTER-RELATED THEMES: (A) THE  
EAST REGARDS HELSINKI AS AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE IN EAST-  
WEST DETENTE AND THEREFORE HAS SCRUPULOUSLY OBSERVED THE  
AGREEMENT; (B) THERE ARE FORCES IN THE WEST WHICH SEEK  
TO SABOTAGE DETENTE, AND THESE FORCES HAVE SELECTED  
HUMAN RIGHTS AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF DOING SO;  
(C) SHCHARANSKY, GINSBURG, BAHRO, HUEBNER, ET. AL. ARE

TRAITORS PAID BY THE WEST WHO GOT WHAT THEY DESERVED; AND (D) WESTERN GOVERNMENTS THEMSELVES VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS ON A LARGE AND SYSTEMATIC SCALE. THE PARTICULAR EMPHASIS THE GDR HAS GIVEN THESE THEMES IS PERHAPS INTENDED TO COUNTER THE WESTERN POINT OF VIEW WHICH IS WIDELY AVAILABLE TO EAST GERMANS THROUGH UBIQUITOUS FRG AND WEST BERLIN TELEVISION AND RADIO. IN ANY EVENT, THE TREATMENT GDR EDITORS GIVE A WIDE VARIETY OF EVENTS SEEMS DESIGNED TO DEFUSE WESTERN CRITICISM ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES AND PORTRAY THE EAST AS THE TRUE DEFENDERS OF THE SPIRIT OF HELSINKI. END SUMMARY

2. A LENGTHY AUGUST 1 EDITORIAL IN THE OFFICIAL SED ORGAN NEUES DEUTSCHLAND, "THREE YEARS AFTER HELSINKI," SOUNDS MOST OF THE GDR MEDIA THEMES REGARDING THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT. IN THE OPENING PARAGRAPH, THE AGREEMENT IS CALLED "THE MOST IMPORTANT MULTILATERAL ACTION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SECURITY AND DEVELOPING THE PRINCIPLES OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE BETWEEN STATES OF DIFFERING SOCIAL SYSTEMS ON OUR CONTINENT SINCE THE ANTI-HITLER COALITION." BREZHNEV AND HONECKER, BUT NO OTHER EASTERN LEADERS, ARE QUOTED AS PRAISING HELSINKI. EDITORIAL GOES ON TO CRITICIZE "REACTIONARY CIRCLES IN THE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES WHO UNDER THE FALSE FLAG OF HUMAN RIGHTS CARRY ON THEIR CRUSADE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AGAINST THE SOCIALIST STATES AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS," AND STATES, "BEHIND THE INCREASED PROVOCATIONS AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION, AGAINST OUR WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' STATE, AND AGAINST OTHER SOCIALIST LANDS IS THE ATTEMPT TO AVOID THEIR OWN CRISES, TO BLOCK DISARMAMENT, TO HEAT UP THE ARMS RACE, AND TO INTRODUCE NEW WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION LIKE THE NEUTRON BOMB." THERE IS, HOWEVER, NO DIRECT CRITICISM OF US OR CARTER ADMINISTRATION. EDITORIAL ASSERTS "THE GDR HAS WORKED ACTIVELY TO SEE THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY SYSTEM, THE FOUR POWER AGREEMENT ON WESTBERLIN(SIC) AND THE FINAL ACT OF HELSINKI ARE CARRIED OUT, AND FULFILLS ALL ITS INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT.... THERE IS NO PORTION OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT WHERE THE GDR CANNOT CITE CONCRETE MEASURES AND RESULTS." IT CONCLUDES BY DECLARING THAT THE GDR WILL CONTINUE TO HONOR AND OBEY HELSINKI AS A "BASIS FOR DEEPENED RELATIONS BETWEEN STATES OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL SYSTEMS."

3. IN OTHER COVERAGE, WHILE ATTEMPTING TO BLUNT HUMAN RIGHTS CRITICISM FROM WEST, GDR PRESS ALSO SEEKS TO SHOW

THAT WESTERN COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY THE U.S. AND FRG, THEMSELVES VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS. RECENT WASHINGTON DEMONSTRATIONS BY AMERICAN INDIANS, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE REPORTED IN NEUES DEUTSCHLAND UNDER HEADLINES "INDIAN LEADERS: ORIGINAL INHABITANTS THREATENED WITH EXTERMINATION THROUGH USA AUTHORITIES" (JULY 26), "INDIANS NO LONGER WANT TO BE TREATED LIKE CRIMINALS" (JULY 29-30), AND "INDIAN WOMEN STERILIZED IN USA: DOCTORS EXPLOIT IGNORANCE AND LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES OF WOMEN" (JULY 31). NEUES DEUTSCHLAND READERS ALSO FREQUENTLY ENCOUNTER COVERAGE OF WILMINGTON 10; AUGUST 3 EDITION, FOR EXAMPLE, REPRINTS TEXT OF TELEGRAM FROM "GDR

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PEACE COMMITTEE" TO BEN CHAVIS UNDER HEADLINE, "GDR CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTS THE STRUGGLE OF THE WILMINGTON 10." IN ADJACENT ARTICLE, UNDER HEADLINE "A SIGNIFICANT SUCCESS OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY," NEUES DEUTSCHLAND REPRINTS DECLARATION OF "GDR COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS" ON FREEING OF VAREEN,

JACOBS, AND MCCOY OF WILMINGTON 10. REASON FOR FREE-  
ING GIVEN AS "PRESSURE OF WORLDWIDE PROTEST," AND  
DECLARATION CALLS FOR INCREASED EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF  
CHAVIS. IN SIMILAR VEIN, NEUES DEUTSCHLAND OF  
5-6 AUGUST HAS ARTICLE ON JOHN HARRIS, REPORTED FACING  
DEATH SENTENCE IN ALABAMA. PIECE HEADLINED "HARRIS:  
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HUMAN RIGHTS IN USA IGNORED; CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER THANKS  
SOVIET YOUTH FOR SOLIDARITY." OTHER "HUMAN RIGHTS"  
COVERAGE OF U.S. IS MORE GENERAL, AS "HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLA-  
TIONS ARE EVERYDAY OCCURRENCES IN USA;  
PERMANENT TERROR DETERMINED" (JULY 29-30). SUCH STORIES  
ALMOST NEVER CITE HELSINKI OR SOVIET AND GDR DISSIDENTS,  
BUT TIE-IN IS OBVIOUS.

4. UNLIKE SOVIET PRESS, WHICH IS PORTRAYING FRG POLICY  
AS MORE IN LINE WITH DETENTE THAN THAT OF U.S.  
(REFS A AND B), GDR PRESS PREDICTABLY TAKES DIFFERENT  
TACK, WITH FRG CONSTANTLY DEPICTED AS HAVEN FOR UNRECON-  
STRUCTED NAZIS. ON JULY 15 (DAY PRESIDENT CARTER VISITED  
WEST BERLIN ACCOMPANIED BY CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT) NEUES  
DEUTSCHLAND HAD PAGE 1 HEADLINE "BUNDESREPUBLIK--THE  
REPUBLIC OF NAZI JUDGES AND HANGMEN."  
COVERAGE (WHICH WAS BASED ON FILBINGER STORY) OBVIOUSLY  
TIMED TO CARTER/SCHMIDT VISIT, BUT IN LINE WITH  
CONSISTENT GDR MEDIA THEME THAT FRG IS HOME OF WAR  
CRIMINALS AND HAS NO MORAL BASIS FOR MAKING PRONOUNCEMENTS  
ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

5. REF C DESCRIBES EXTENSIVE TREATMENT WHICH TRIALS OF  
SOVIET DISSIDENTS RECEIVED IN GDR PRESS, WHILE REFS D AND  
E DISCUSS GDR'S OWN BAHRO AND HUEBNER CASES.  
COMMON THEME IS THAT ALL DEFENDANTS WERE OBVIOUSLY GUILTY  
OF TRAITOROUS ACTIVITIES WHICH WERE  
ENCOURAGED AND FINANCED BY WESTERN INTELLIGENCE. THIS  
TACTIC PARTICULARLY EVIDENT IN SHCHARANSKY AND  
GINSBERG COVERAGE, WHICH WAS CONSISTENTLY FEATURED WITH  
STORIES ON FILATOV. IN ALL PRESS COVERAGE, CLEAR INTENT  
WAS TO SHOW DEFENDANTS WERE GUILTY AS CHARGED, AND CASES  
HAD NO HUMAN RIGHTS DIMENSIONS. READERS INSTEAD WERE  
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ENCOURAGED TO CONCLUDE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES AS POR-  
TRAYED IN WESTERN PRESS MUST HAVE HAD DEEPER AND MORE  
SINISTER PURPOSE, I.E., TO SUBVERT DETENTE.

6. COMMENT: HELSINKI AND HUMAN RIGHTS AS DEPICTED IN THE GDR PRESS PROBABLY REFLECTS A MEASURE OF THE SELF-RIGHTOUSNESS AND MORAL PRETENSION WHICH GDR PARTY FAITHFUL SOMETIMES DISPLAY. TO SOME DEGREE, IT PROBABLY REPRESENTS THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT AND THE EVENTS OF THE LAST MONTHS WHICH HAVE MADE "HELSINKI" SYNONYMOUS WITH "HUMAN RIGHTS" IN THE MINDS OF MANY PEOPLE. THE ORCHESTRATED COVERAGE AND THE REPETITION OF THE FOUR THEMES CITED ABOVE IN A VARIETY OF CONTEXTS ALSO SEEM CALCULATED TO WIN THE SUPPORT OF THE GDR PUBLIC AT LARGE, OR AT LEAST MAKE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC DOUBT THE VERSION OF EVENTS THEY SEE REGULARLY ON THE NIGHTLY NEWS WHICH MANY OF THEM WATCH ON WESTERN TELEVISION.

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## Message Attributes

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